

151A

TECH TRAP

Phone and social media addiction harms adolescent health

With just a single tap, a new realm opens where likes determine worth and screen time devours your health. What may seem as a useful tool has become a weapon that traps you.

In the modern society, social media and technology plays a vital role in everyday life, especially for a teenager's. However, in the recent Pew Research Center study, 44% of parents believe that social media negatively affects their children's mental health.

A study from the University of Chichester, the compulsive use of social media, also referred to as dopamine-scrolling, and consumption of short-form media, leads to distracted minds, deterioration of social life, and more potential mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, chronic stress, and lower self-esteem.

Moreover, when screen time impacts sleep, various issues emerge such as lower academic performance, mood instability, lack of concentration, and increased anxiety, as identified by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

In the Philippines, 95.8 million netizens use social media that spends an average of 33 hours and 50 minutes on a weekly basis which puts the majority of the population at the risk of addiction.

Filipino youth are most vulnerable to these concerns as most teenagers use social media and mobile phones, being lured by the entertaining content, interaction, and rewards they have to offer.

To address these concerns, multiple ways to treat phone and social media addiction were identified as part of Digital Wellness where balanced technology used is promoted to improve overall well-being.

For phone addiction, one needs to address habit loops, environmental cues, and practice tolerating discomfort away from phone. While for social media addiction, one needs to develop healthier online engagement and build self-worth.

Nevertheless, a balanced and healthy relationship with technology will become a useful tool for connecting with other people, discovering new things, and exploring identities. However, once the sweet bait is mindlessly bitten, it becomes a difficult trap to escape from.

Trap In a Tap

2nd A

Getting trapped by something is never easy to see the light. Once you are in, you are now in the consequence. That is what phones are, innocent but is actually the antagonist.

A research conducted by the Pew Research Center states that the overall percentage of parents believing social media is affecting teens' mental health is 44%. Affecting also the emotional and physical health of the youth.

The relationship between social media, phones, and teens are somewhere between the middle. It can cause destruction to their health or it can be the cure.

Dopamine-scrolling, pulling to refresh, short form video and many more can lead to fragmented attention, mental distraction, degraded social interaction, and potential issues like anxiety, stress, and depression.

According to a study by the University of Chichester, the issues get worse like a volcano eruption: chronic stress, low self-esteem and more, especially when screen use impacts sleep, exercise, or in-person social interaction.

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends limiting screen use before bedtime and keeping devices out of bedroom overnight. This helps teens to really focus on the sunlight and not focus on the darkness that awaits.

In a total population of 117 million in the Philippines, 83.8% are online, 97.8% go online via mobile phones, 81.9% are active on social media, and 23 hours and 50 minutes average weekly time spent on social media.

Phone addiction is only the tip of the iceberg, social media addiction goes deeper. Social media can help socialize other people. But that comes with the catch, mainly cyberbullying.

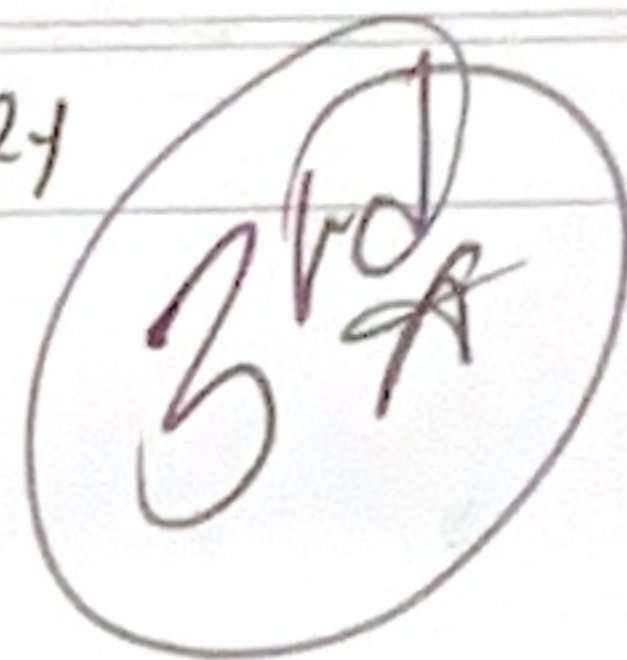
Specific platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat is where the friendship starts. But, it is also the birthing place for anxiety, self-doubt, depression, and cyberbullying.

Endless scrolling, checking notifications, posting, seeking likes / validation, comparing self to others. It feels like a race — a race that does not even exist. Making you an addict because of dopamine-driven stuff.

Social media is neither a bad thing nor a good thing, it has benefits, it has cruelty. Digital wellness is one thing teens should learn in ways that support mental, emotional, and physical health.

Digital wellness helps prevent deterioration in one's mental health. The youth is our future and the sunlight on the east. Prevention is something to remember.





SCREEN OF DESPAIR: TRAPPED IN AN ENDLESS SCROLLING

Scrolling too much and the phone will eat you so much. Under the study of Pew Research Center, there are 44% of parents supports that one of the biggest destructive influences on teen's mental health is social media. Accompanied by endless but pointless scrolling that instantly became the center of attention.

According to the Vital Statistics, over 117 million of population lies beneath this trend. There are 83.8% of user actively online. 81.9% in social media and 97.8% of Filipinos that already lived in the world of Social Media.

Attaching phone addiction that triggers the soul of the users and catching their full attention. Screen flashes the face, fixing the gaze onto a notification that popped out of nowhere. This activity repeated in a billion times yet everyone are enjoying it without getting bored.

Millions of users and its consequences are rising. Lack of sleep, poor academic performance, out of concentration, anxiety and other impacts that are actually being ignored. Eventually, these are already being part of our routine. Social Media enters without knocking, yet we still let it slide in and eating our parts.

In the world of technology, humans received a lots of benefits from it. However, we also spoiled ourselves in using it. From the study of the University of Chichester, this too much will constantly lead you to mental distraction, low social interaction, and many other potential health issues that will somehow drive you crazy.

Matter of fact, there are 33 hours and 50 minutes average weekly time spent on social media. This emphasizes that phone itself are not just being part of our routine. It fully devours our lives pushing out our ordinary routines. Social Media and Phone addiction, they both lead users into a dim of despair.

For example, a child that kept herself locked inside her comfort zone. Leaving only phone be her companion. Ignoring what is happening outside the world because she is already in advanced world. People will say that this child really loved being alone. But, little do they know that the child was never alone, she has companion.

In addition, every users built their own world. They enjoyed not in personal but in media interaction. Some are being betrayed by their own media world which eventually resulted in ending their own lives.

Overall, this media space is never good. It creates a gap between the user and family connections. This will fall into mental breakdowns. But, the real monster isn't the phone neither the social media, it is the user. Social media never dies but the consequences never lies.

4th

Destructive Harmony: How phones and social media affect children ~~netizens~~ online

In an ever-changing reality that is shifting to a realm of digital screens and artificial landscapes, individuals whose lives are controlled by the strings of a phone grow increasingly large, where children are most vulnerable.

According to a recent Pew Research Center study, the number of parents that have grown concerned to their children into believing that social media is the biggest catalyst of their mental health is at 44%. The number was brought up even after acknowledging that their phones play a vital role in their child's social life.

Yet, for a child's life to be as peaceful with a phone as it is like water and electronics. Based from a study from the University of Chichester, the endless doom-scrolling with short form videos proves as a deadly duo in causing mental issues such as fragmented attention, anxiety, and depression.

A child's academic performance is also stunted, with social media addiction causing a huge chunk of damage in terms of poor sleep, and difficulty in concentrating. Though, due to this, the American Academy of Sleep medicine recommends limiting screen use before bedtime.

However, children can practice the use of digital wellness. It is an action where the use of technology can actually help you in terms of supporting one's health, balance, and overall well-being.

The knowledge of the difference between phone addiction and social media addiction can help provide a more effective treatment. If an individual has a more compulsive relationship with a phone itself, it is tagged as a phone addiction. While if an individual is more compulsive in needing to engage with social media, it is labeled as a social media addiction.

Despite the two being similar to the regular eye, it is the opposite if one's goal is to provide treatment. Phone addiction can be treated by escaping the habit of picking up a digital screen when your mind begs for a dopamine boost. For some, placing a boundary between you and your phone can provide an effective method in escaping the addiction.

Though, the treatment for social media addiction requires the individual to have a stronger heart than a smarter mind. Treatments involve building self-worth, developing a healthier online engagement, and getting rid of one's thought patterns such as comparing yourself to others.

For an individual who's battling the destructive harmony of both social media and phone addiction, one's heart and mind requires resilience in the face of temptation. We should not let digital screens consume us before we control the digital frenzy instead.

5A

Behind The Screens

Behind these screens lies different identities and their way of technology usage, but would they stay hidden behind all the radiation and remain unknown?

Today's trend is the use of modern technologies, expanded internet walks in; engagement, fun contents, and widened device features.

According to Pew Research Center's study, 44% of concerned parents believe that social media has served as one of the enormous negative influences within a teen's mental health even the presence of a device's importance is also acknowledged. There comes in the underlying disguise of the modern technologies; addiction and obsession.

Many claims that phones play an important role — well, as long as resurfacing harms doesn't rise up.

"Doomscrolling", "bedrotting", excessive screen time; these are the core of one's reason why they are so-called as phone-addicted. Of course a device is a necessity for communication, and outside interaction — not the reason for staying in bed all night and day.

Poor sleep is connected to lower academic performance, swinging or unstable moods, and bad concentration. These harms provide negative effects in our well-being. Time is running, yet the clock is still unacknowledged.

"Time is gold" they say, one of the gold-surfacing use is to value the passing seconds of holding screens. The average weekly spent time on social media says otherwise. Around 33 hours and 50 minutes are used, with this time, time is surely isn't gold but a metal scrap.

Out of 117 million of internet platform users, 97.8% Filipinos are a part within the millions that goes online via mobile phones.

Filipino students are claimed to be phone-addicted learners, not only because they use technologies to excuse it for "academic purposes", but also as the core step to further depth of harm.

Inside the internet world stands every certain harm, once addiction enters — you'll fade like an unknown user behind the screen.

Phone addiction refers to an obsessive relationship with the device itself, using it regardless of one's internet platform location. Yes, a phone can be your friend but not something you'll dedicate yourself into.

Once addiction overcomes your mind like a brain-eating amoeba, every bacteria serves as triggers of boredom, discomfort, and stress. Without the device by your side, you will indeed roam other alternate activities that relates to using internet like another senseless zombie.

However, phone addiction differs from social media addiction. While phone addiction refers to obsession of device usage, social media addiction focuses on the idea of "fear of missing out vibes".

Engaging with users means connecting and making a bond with people as you explore them and their community. Consistent engagement can pursue strong connection but not result in FOMO emotion states.

95.8 million social media users are identified, we may not know which of them are addiction-accumulated or not. And sadly, that's the truth — whom we don't know is whom we cannot easily lend help from escaping the darkness of addiction and anxiety.

Enter "digital wellness", this is the conscious practice of using technology as a safe haven that supports one's well-being. Within this practice, screen limitations are held before bedtime; the American Academy of Sleep Medicine's recommendation.

A step forward ~~into~~ the real world is holding the proper usage of technology, without any addiction nor obsession beyond any surfaces. After all, those behind the screens cannot remain as anonymous forever.

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